DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 439 005 RC 022 336

AUTHOR	Ley, Joyce
TITLE	School Community Renewal: A Cooperative Revitalization Strategy for Rural Schools, Students, and Communities. Full-Scale Version of Rural Renewal Strategies for Network Developme\t.
INSTITUTION	Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR, Rural Education Program.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-05-31
NOTE	36p.; Alternate title inside report: "Full Scale Formative Evaluation of the Rural Network Development Pilot Effort."
CONTRACT	1132-230
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Community Cooperation; *Community Development; *Disadvantaged Schools; Economically Disadvantaged; Elementary Secondary Education; Formative Evaluation; Minority Groups; Networks; *Research and Development; *Rural Schools; *School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Capacity Building; Networking; *Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

ABSTRACT

The work of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in rural education focuses on the intersection between school renewal and rural community development. NWREL's Rural School-Community Renewal Research and Development project aims to develop the capacity of small rural schools enrolling many economically disadvantaged students to carry out long-term educational improvement efforts centered on community goals. Three parallel development goals address education and community resources for building local capacity; delivery of these capacity-building resources; and the interaction of capable community revitalization teams to provide mutual support within and across communities. This third-year formative evaluation report focuses on the last of these goals and builds on findings from the first- and second-year evaluations. Six pilot communities with high poverty rates, below-average student achievement, and low population growth were selected in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington; four sites had substantial minority populations (Hispanic or Native American). The previous evaluations emphasized the need for sensitivity to existing community networks and suggested that diversity among rural communities means that they would seldom be at the same developmental place. These findings strongly mitigate the effectiveness of externally-applied models or designs. Accordingly, the unique context of each site was central to third-year efforts and presented some difficulties for networking activities. Detailed descriptions of the context, activities, and progress at each site are included. Data tables outline project design elements, NWREL activities, site progress based on original design elements, and third-year progress and hindrances at each site. (SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

RC

ED 439 005

School Community Renewal: A Cooperative Revitalization Strategy for Rural Schools, Students, and Communities

Full-Scale Version of Rural Renewal Strategies for Network Development

May 31, 1999

Joyce Ley, Director
Rural Education Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RC022336

OERI Task 2 Development and Applied Research
NWREL Contract #1132-230
Event (Deliverable)

Table of Contents

Page

I. Introduction 1

II. Context 3

III. Evaluation Framework 5

Year One Formative Evaluation Results 5

Year Two Formative Evaluation Procedures 7

IV. Evaluation Findings 8

Site Progress 9

Metlakatla, Alaska and the Annette Island School District 10

Mackay, Idaho and the Mackay School District 16

South Wasco County School District, Oregon and Communities 21

North Franklin School District, Washington and Communities 21

White Pass School District, Washington and Communities 22

V. Conclusion and Implications 28

Finding Support and Fo

Lessons and Next Steps ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

References 31

Full Scale Formative Evaluation of the Rural Network Development Pilot Effort

I. Introduction

The work of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in rural education focuses upon the intersection between school renewal and rural community development. The region's schools, including small, rural schools, are engaged in reform and improvement efforts to benefit the nature and effectiveness of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to challenging learning experiences and standards for all students. A variety of initiatives, including school-to-work transition programs, experiential education, service learning, and place-based education, have encouraged greater use of community resources and situations as meaningful learning opportunities for students. NWREL's review of the literature on community-based learning notes:

> (A)lthough there are many programs that could be labeled community-based learning, few educators have yet used this term or started to sell community-based learning as a broad set of strategies to enhance educational reform (Owens & Wang, 1996).

Throughout the nation, people have recently rediscovered the concept of "community." For educators, it has become a particularly important concept. Within the school as a social organization, there is a trend toward the creation of "learning communities" to encourage professional reflection and dialogue. Beyond the school, parent involvement is no longer a sufficient means for developing the relationship between school and the local milieu. The school is now part of developing a core value for community identity and sense of place emerging for rural and urban settings alike. Seltzer (1997) summarizes:

> Communities want to have distinct identities. They do not want to simply blend in with their neighbors to the point where their boundaries become invisible and both residents and nonresidents have no clue as to when they've gone from one community to another.

There are many approaches for linking rural schools and communities. Miller (1995) speaks of three: (1) the school as a community center, (2) the community as the basis for curriculum, and (3) school-based enterprise.

We have adapted these approaches to our region. Though the northwest corner of the United States has a reputation for economic opportunities, natural environments, and vital communities, a very large proportion of isolated rural communities are struggling economically and socially. Some are experiencing rapid, unmanaged growth which is dramatically changing the nature of the community. Others are experiencing insidious decline and erosion of their local economic and social capital. All are in transition. A host of community development organizations are providing assistance in economic development, community enterprise, environmental enhancement and health promotion, but rarely have

schools and educators engaged in these community development efforts as cooperative partners.

Schools and communities share responsibility for nourishing their most precious resource—youth. Students can ensure that the vitality of the community can be sustained into the future. If schools and communities work closely together to address educational goals that support community well being, then all will benefit. In 1990, the NWREL Rural Education Program began a pilot program to test, in three rural communities, strategies for encouraging school involvement in rural community development. This school community development partnership evolved into the current five-year applied research and development workscope to expand and refine rural school and community renewal.

The purpose of the Rural School-Community Renewal R&D project is to develop and expand local capacity of small, rural community schools enrolling significant numbers of economically disadvantaged students to initiate and sustain long-term educational improvement efforts which result in measurable progress toward the attainment of community-based learner outcomes. Three parallel development goals were proposed for conducting this work:

1. Develop and test a set of principles and capacity-building tools and processes which will enable members of rural communities (school staff, parents, students, and other patrons) to mobilize and lead locally-driven school improvement to achieve the educational goals of the community within district, state, and national frameworks for reform.

2. Develop and test processes, content, and strategies for the professional development of rural leadership cadres to create communities of learners for planning, organizing, and assessing local educational improvements.

3. Develop and test local and regional rural collaborative networks to facilitate the sharing of information and collaborative inquiry among rural educators and community members pursuing educational reform to strengthen an interdependent economy of scale.

Essentially, the first goal looks at education and community development resources for building local capacity; the second looks at how these capacity-building resources can be delivered; and the third at how capable community revitalization teams can interact with one another to provide mutual support within and across communities. This formative evaluation report focuses upon the third of these goals and builds upon findings and recommendations from the first- and second-year formative evaluation reports (June 1997 and August 1998).

II. Context

The applied research and development work in rural education focuses on developing and expanding the local capacity of small, rural community schools to initiate and sustain long-term educational improvement efforts. In year one, the Rural Education Program implemented a plan which called for the identification of five rural pilot sites, the sponsorship of a design conference to initiate the development of local leadership cadres, and local testing of a set of principles, tools and processes designed to mobilize and lead community-driven school improvement.

Invitations were sent to identified rural school districts with high poverty, below average achievement and low population growth. Site visits were made to each community expressing an interest in participation. During these visits, we determined (1) the degree of district and community commitment to a long-term partnership for renewal, and (2) the degree of readiness and/or progress in defining learner results to address goals for community well-being. A final determination was made of the five R&D rural partner schools and communities, along with a sixth site where scaling-up efforts were to be made with and through other agencies.

The sites reflect the diversity of the region in terms of the size, economic base, and ethnicity of the its rural communities (see Table 1). The communities are dependent upon various combinations of agriculture, timber, light manufacturing, and tourism. One of the communities is located on a reservation; another has a significant number of Hispanic farm workers. Local institutional partners reflect this diversity—from intermediate education units to timber corporations—all in support of local public education. An important consideration of this R&D project relates to how this diversity mediates outcomes. In other words, how do the differences within communities interact with the NWREL intervention strategies to effect the renewal outcomes achieved?

Table 1. Year One Pilot Communities

State	District	Enrollment	Percent Poverty	Percent Minority
Alaska	Annette Island	406	14%	93%
Idaho	Mackay	314	22%	2%
Oregon	South Wasco Co.	284	28%	20%
Montana	Ronan	1615	32%	38%
Washington	North Franklin	1530	23%	40%
Washington	White Pass	955	12%	4%

In June 1996, partner sites, along with other collaborating institutions, participated in an initial three-day design conference to build the first-year field development and evaluation plan. In preparation for this design work, local ad hoc site teams of school staff, students, parents, trustees, and other community members were formed to guide local renewal efforts, select a local facilitator, and form a school community council.

In year two the focus shifted toward networking strategies within and among four of the original five sites. The Montana site withdrew from the project because of changes in the district and community. Moreover, a scale-up site was added as a result of a collaborative arrangement between the White Pass School District, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) and NWREL. In February 1997, a second meeting was held with the five teams to explore various networking resources, including communications technology, state/federal community development partners, and creating peer support networks. By the conclusion of year two, a formative evaluation of rural renewal strategies intended to sustain local community leadership cadres had been completed.

In year three our focus on networking is sustained with attention paid to the unique context and process trajectories of each site. One effect of local circumstances and progress is South Wasco's withdrawal from the partnership in summer, 1998. Citing community tensions and the untenable position of the superintendent as liaison, they were unable to meet project goals.

The design of the year one formative evaluation and the conclusions drawn provide the framework upon which the second year formative evaluation report was developed. This framework also forms the foundation for this third evaluation report and is presented in the following section.

III. Evaluation Framework

Year One and Year Two Formative Evaluation Results

The first year formative evaluation report examined the *design*, *content*, and *processes* of the rural renewal strategies. Specifically, these three dimensions include such areas as operating principles underlying the strategies, training content, and processes for delivering content and ongoing support. Results from the first-year report indicate that the essential design dimensions remain a viable framework for continuation of the school-community strategies. However, important guidelines and ideas for revising the three dimensions were recommended (see Table 2).

The results of the first year evaluation are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. Results from the First Year Formative Evaluation Report

Dimension	Fidelity Question (Was this addressed?)	Sufficiency Question (Is this enough?)	Results From First Formative Report
Design Principles	Do the design assumptions appear to hold true?	Are there additional principles that need to be incorporated into the plan?	Although design elements generally held true, they must be viewed as highly adaptable and contingent upon local contexts. Two additional principles have been suggested: (1) communities are structured as networks of existing social groups that must cooperate and/or collaborate for renewal to happen, and (2) communities vary widely on their readiness and willingness to engage in school-community renewal.
School-Community Development Content	Is the intended content being imparted to the local community?	Is there additional content that needs to be incorporated into the plan?	The original process content was too linear and rigid to fit the diversity of the pilot sites. However, many of the development skills and strategies were viewed as beneficial and used. Moreover, existing networks of community activity constrained the introduction of community councils, even when clear needs existed. Identifying local community networks and learning how to engage them in the school-community partnership may be vital to its success.
Processes for School-Community Capacity Building	Is the implementation plan being carried out as intended?	Are there additional implementation considerations which need to be incorporated into the plan?	Although the plan has been carried out as specified in the scope of work, numerous modifications are warranted that emphasize the unique strengths and qualities of each community and that help local stakeholders to identify and build upon existing social networks for the reciprocal sharing of resources.

Year Two Formative Findings

The second year formative evaluation report identified two additional principles, both of which center around the great diversity that has become a signature characteristic of rural America. First, rural communities are generally places of high civic and social activity, which generally occurs within networks of like-minded folks. For example, a horse riders' club may engage in community improvement activities such as trail maintenance and horsemanship safety; or the cattlemen's association may offer educational programs for local youth. Such groups need to be identified and brought into partnership with other networks in order to serve mutually beneficial goals and to help reduce the stress associated with few people having too much to do. Moreover, understanding these networks may be a primary ingredient in determining a community's readiness to engage in planned renewal activities. This leads to the second principle added to the renewal approach: Rural communities vary widely in their readiness to engage in school-community renewal.

Within the dimension of school-community development content, it was learned that because communities vary so much in terms of self-knowledge, leadership opportunities, and economic and social conditions, any approach based on a single design will likely fail. Approaches must adapt to diverse contexts and changing conditions. However, the most significant insight revolves around the importance of understanding the local place in terms of existing networks of organized and constructive community activity. These are the assets and resources that help sustain the community and give it life. This insight has led to an important modification in the third dimension: *processes for school-community capacity building*.

The implications of the second year formative evaluation directed our emphasis to helping community members learn strategies and approaches for building capacity from within based on local networks. This strategy revision facilitates analysis and relationship building within and among community networks. Moreover, this change brings about a shift in local thinking from the notion that the expertise needed for addressing community needs exists outside the community to a reliance on local resources and assets.

Table 3 presents an overview of the major development activities designed to support pilot-site progress in linking communities and schools together around community-based learning and development goals.

Table 3. NWREL Activities Supporting Pilot-Site Progress

Date	Activity	Participants Involved	Outcomes
8/97	Design conference with partner institutions to draft leadership and renewal prototype	North Franklin (WA), White Pass (WA) , Metlakatla (AK), and Mackay (ID) sent representatives. South Wasco County (OR) was unable to participate. Institutional representatives included: the Montana DOE, Oregon DOE, Washington school superintendents, Idaho school principals, the Idaho PTA, and the Idaho DOE.	• Cross-site networking, facilitated by site presentations • Site teams reviewed and discussed materials relating to collaborative leadership, dialogue, collaborative networking, and asset mapping • Site teams learned to map individual, environmental, organizational, and institutional resources for their respective communities • Reviewed newly developed *Community Resource Manual* • Learned ideas for implementing school-to-work strategies • Developed action plans along with desired topics for next conference
8/97	Implementation of a listserve connecting each pilot site via telecommunications	Metlakatla – liaison Mackay – liaison White Pass – liaison North Franklin – superintendent South Wasco – superintendent	Each site liaison or designate subscribed to a listserve managed by NWREL staff. Some sites such as White Pass (WA), South Wasco County (OR), and Mackay (ID) have used the listserve to share resources and for network communications. Rural resources and grant opportunities have been posted regularly. North Franklin (WA) and Metlakatla (AK) have had connectivity problems.
11/97	Complete rural leadership and network development prototype	NWREL and staff and community liaisons	Original design elements (see Table 5) continue to have validity for school-community development work. However, the design, timing, and implementation require a highly context-sensitive approach based on three areas of focus: creating dialogue, network analysis, and mapping local assets. For the remainder of the contract work, efforts will address development work in these three interrelated areas.
2/98	Conduct pilot-site conference on student engagement and curriculum	All pilot sites except Metlakatla (AK) sent a teacher and a student. Individuals representing state-level policy institutions, administrative organizations, and parents attended.	The conference was designed to inform a cross section of decisionmakers on ideas and strategies for enabling youth to become active in community-based learning through a series of interactive panel presentations and discussions: • Five expert teachers and two students presented strategies on how they involved students in community-based learning • A student panel presented ideas on how to support youth in community-based learning and service opportunities • Teachers presented on how to support teacher efforts to engage youth in community learning experiences

These findings have influenced our year-three work in important ways. We have continued to provide arenas for cross-site interaction and allowed for local variation in all phases of the project. Participants voiced a strong conviction that the opportunity to meet and share plans, accomplishments, and challenges with colleagues from the other sites strengthened their renewal efforts. A key reason is the uncertainty liaisons tend to feel as they move through uncharted territory in their quest to create support and find direction for the school-community partnership. This appears especially important in light of the difficulties encountered as they attempted to implement the six design elements introduced in the project's first year without adaptation to the local context:

1. Designate a community liaison
2. Establish community coordinating committee
3. Develop of a clear vision
4. Articulate an action plan
5. Implement the plan
6. Evaluate and celebrate progress

Conference participants strongly endorsed continued materials development. Participants have reviewed and discussed concept papers that focused on issues emerging from the first-year evaluation: creating dialogue as a foundation for community building, strategies for within and across community networking, and tools for mapping local assets. NWREL has published and distributed two of four school-community resource workbooks that resulted from participants' comments and suggestions:

1. *Strengthening Community Education: The Basis for Sustainable Community Renewal. Building Partnerships Workbook*

   This workbook walks through issues that arise in the first stages of community development. It begins with basic questions about how we understand the concept and practice of community to explore the premises under which we engage in community action. The premises that guide community development work significantly affect the outcome of community-oriented projects. The predominating view offered here is that community is about relationships among people that are the foundation of organizational and institutional partnerships. It is by cultivating, enhancing, and actively participating in various kinds of relationships that communities thrive and are sustained.

2. *The Basis for Sustainable Community Renewal: Mapping Community*

   This workbook explores asset mapping as a technique and way of creating knowledge about what exists within the confines of what people understand as their community. This knowledge translates directly into resources as it reveals the wealth of social relations, skills, and knowledge of community members as well as the rich landscape of materials,

institutions, and commercial and environmental resources within their grasp. Asset mapping is introduced as a strategy for engaging diverse community members in learning who and where they are as they embark on projects and processes of community development. It enables all community members to see how often untapped or unacknowledged resources such as schools, youth, ethnic minorities, etc. are integrally woven into community life and its future.

In addition, one more workbook in this series and a resource manual will appear in 1999:

3. *The Basis for Sustainable Community Renewal: Founding Community Through Dialogue* (tentative title)

   This workbook focuses on a particular way of speaking and listening that has evolved into a foundation of community development strategies. It is known as *dialogue*. We include dialogue in this workbook series on community development because it is an invaluable tool in community organizing. People who do or do not consider themselves community activists can learn how to engage their neighbors in fruitful dialogues that go beneath the surface to explore the grounds on which our beliefs lay and therefore our motivations to act. From these grounds, individuals learn through speaking and listening how to form collectives and collaborate.

4. *The Basis for Sustainable Community Renewal: Resource Manual*

   The final work in the series is an annotated list of community development materials that reference issues of leadership, rural strategies, the roles of schools and youth, organizing processes, and the entire range of issues touched on in the three workbooks.

These four workbooks will provide training resources for current and future development work.

Site Progress: Year Three

This section answers the following questions: What has been accomplished since the year two formative evaluation? How have the insights learned during the first two years been translated into action? Have any new insights and directions emerged?

In this third year, our work focussed on documenting and assessing existing networks and continuing to develop new networks. We facilitated this work through two forums, site visits, resource support, and listserve discussions and announcements. In order to understand at which point in the overall process each site has undertaken year three network activities, Table 5 presents pilot sites' progress since the project began in spring 1996. Results have been presented according to key project design elements. This table serves not only as a framework for presenting site progress but for illustrating how local context, changes in personnel, and the diversity of rural settings makes a single renewal model difficult, if not impossible, to follow. The issue of diversity, raised in the year two evaluation, continues to be an important issue.

Table 5. Overview of Pilot Site Progress Based on Original Design Elements

	Pilot Sites				
Design Elements	**Annette Islands, AK**	**Mackay, ID**	**South Wasco, OR**	**North Franklin, WA**	**White Pass, WA**
1. Community Liaison	The Meltlakatla Indian Community Council Member has assumed this position	After one resignation, a new person has been selected and trained	Ended the partnership in August 1998	Liaison continues with additional help hired	Liaison continues with additional help hired
2. Operating Community Council or Committee	Committee selected but there is not sustained involvement with school staff	Active participation by several school staff on an ad hoc basis		Original committee has evolved into PACE (Partners Achieving Community Excellence) organization	Community advisory board identified from Washington State School Directors' (WSSDA) Association strategic planning process
3. Vision Development	In conjunction with Enterprise Community Planning, a vision is developing	Yes		PACE is coordinating community activities and organizations	Within WSSDA strategic planning activity
4. Action Planning	Not attempted	Nothing formal emerged from the vision, but action plans developed around specific needs and/or grants		Planning occurring under separate initiatives	Planning occurring under separate initiatives
5. Implementation	Not attempted	Numerous related activities occurring		Numerous related activities occurring	Numerous related activities occurring
6. Evaluation and Celebration	Not attempted	Yes		Yes	Yes

Beyond these measures of progress, we have also documented existing community networks and described how they interact with one another to support community sustainability. Of special interest is networks teachers identify with and use to connect students to the community. Although such connections are not the norm in schools, evidence does exist in our pilot sites that some teachers nurture ties to the community in order to make learning more meaningful. For example, the high school science teacher in White Pass (WA) has helped create a network of people interested in water quality including Forest Service workers, colleagues, local experts, and students. The end result has been curriculum where students help their community monitor water use and quality. Their work has been recognized regionally: it received a Forest Service Caring for the Land Award in March 1999. We are continuing to learn how teachers form such networks and sustain them over time to enrich and

expand core curriculum. What we learn provides rich data to help inform and focus NWREL community development work now and for the future.

In particular, we have learned that the most successful tool for networking is face-to-face interaction. Other forums are less effective, but this may due to underutilization as much as anything else. Liaisons read what NWREL sends out on the listserve, but generally respond only to NWREL. They do not post messages to the whole list. Some sites such as White Pass (WA), Mackay (ID), and South Wasco County (OR) have used the listserve to schedule meetings, share resources, and provide updates. However, most communication tends to be primarily with NWREL. Efforts will continue to use the listserve as a networking and communications tool.

We have found that participants consistently appreciate the networking and information sharing opportunities NWREL conferences and forums provide. To meet, share experiences, ask for guidance, and learn from other's activities, all agreed, is useful, inspiring, and effective. Yet, this evaluation report's most critical findings concern the fact that each site may find it is involved in several competing networks. The success of our promotion of network links may be the undoing of the NWREL partnership. We are confronting the question: At which point in the project can we say it has succeeded by which we mean the site no longer needs the NWREL partnership?

In contrast to the first two years, now some sites question the value of NWREL gatherings or protest that they are too busy to attend. We agree with the view the White Pass liaison proffered to participants of the October Joint Forum: NWREL activities were not peripheral to the work that people were or wanted to be doing: it was in fact that very work. Still, we have learned that in small rural school districts, the people who are developing and implementing projects may be so involved in their work that time away from it to attend conferences is more a burden than an aid. Moreover, some participants have said that in addition to their work in the schools and communities, they have opportunities to attend training programs that can lead to funding awards. When faced with the choice of being out of the classroom an unacceptable amount of time or attending only a few of the myriad events available, people choose events that lead to funding over those that do not, such as NWREL's. Metlakatla highlighted its partnership with NWREL in their successful Enterprise Community (EC) grant application. Though the partnership, in small measure, helped them get the funding, subsequent meetings with EC advisors conflicted with and took precedence over the NWREL forum in April.

This third year evaluation finds that we need to reconcile partnership networking opportunities and benefits with individual sites' pursuit of extra-partnership network links. Table 6 below is a summary of each sites' progress in developing networks during the period of this third evaluation. It is followed by a more in-depth account of each site's activities.

Table 6: Overview of Year Three Progress and Hindrances to Progress

Site	Progress	Hindrances to Progress
	US Dept of Labor Welfare to work grant	Non attendance at NWREL April Diversity Forum
Metlakatla	US Dept. of Agriculture Designation as Enterprise Community	Lack of collaboration between Tribal Council and the school
	Visits to other Tribal Enterprise Communities	Superintendent's disinclination to promote ties between school and community
	Collaboration with University of Alaska on small-business trainings	
	Work with Bureau of Indian Affairs on Healing Journeys	
	Meeting with Ecotrust on youth-elder outdoor education	
	Participation in Distribution List	
	Attendance at NWREL October Joint Forum	
	Albertson, Dagget Funding	No kids at Diversity Forum
Mackay	Diversity Forum	No list serve participation
	October joint forum	
	Work Now conference/Learn and Serve pre-conference session	No interest on part of liaison in (both) forums
	Community meeting on three goals for school	Asked to be removed from discussion of at-risk youth
	PACE	Disbanded grant writing group and decided against preparing CDC proposal
North Franklin	Neighborhood outreach	No students at the Diversity Forum
	Community involvement in curriculum/bilingual program development	
	On Public Radio	
	Fundraising for poor residents	
	Home visitors	
	Clothing drive for poor	
	Translation of school newsletters in Spanish	
	Lily going to full-time outreach	
	Passing of levy	
	Affordable health care	
	Collaboration on CDC clinic grant	
	Forestry Service work/award	
White Pass	Mentoring	No listserve participation
	October and April Forum	
	School to work site and evaluation	

Site	Progress	Hindrances to Progress
	US Dept of Labor Welfare to work grant	Non attendance at NWREL April Diversity Forum
Metlakatla	US Dept. of Agriculture Designation as Enterprise Community 21st C learn and serve grant List Serve	Lack of collaboration between Tribal Council and the school

Metlakatla, Alaska and the Annette Islands School District

The Metlakatla Indian Community has faced severe economic decline because of salmon depletion and timber mill closings. Requesting to become a pilot site in the NWREL project appears to have been primarily motivated by these community concerns and far less by the school district. In this community, forging links between school and community has been hampered by an ethnic and cultural divide. Metlakatla is a Native American (Tsimshian) reservation and its school district is almost entirely staffed by non-native Anglos. These two groups struggle to coexist. Moreover, the difficulty this school-community partnership site has had in implementing key project design elements appears related to the norms and patterns of response that help give definition to how each cultural group orients itself to the world.

Since the project's inception, there have been numerous changes in participants, activities, and strategies. In the first two years, there had been little progress toward implementation of any school and/or community renewal projects. Two different people had been selected as volunteer community-school liaisons and both had withdrawn. As a result of a mid-point evaluation meeting, a member of the Tribal Council and head of the Health, Education, and Welfare committee agreed to become the liaison.

The lack of continuity in liaisons is also found in the different teams that participated in the four training conferences held in Portland. Further, no one attended a session that focused on involving youth in community-based learning opportunities or our most recent Diversity Forum. Prior to the site visit to review project progress in May 1998, there had been no site visit since the fall 1997. In part, this has been at the request of the site itself because the last team that attended a training conference indicated they would prefer having no NWREL site visits unless requested.

Additional indicators suggested a lack of progress. For example, early efforts to implement the initial design elements produced few tangible results. Before beginning to work with the current liaison, our most consistent contact had been with the district superintendent. He held a negative view of the community's capacity for follow-through, which left little room for optimism in light of his general belief that the entire partnership endeavor with NWREL was the responsibility of the community, as opposed to the schools.

In some ways his perceptions reflect Annette Islands's status as a sovereign Indian nation. For example, there are few of the organizational and agency supports one finds in most

communities such as a Chamber of Commerce, a Lions Club, or a school taxing structure. Similarly, most teaching staff come from outside the community and must hold a Tribal permit to live and work on the Island. Although these variables do make the Annette Islands School District unique, they need not be barriers, especially if key community and school players choose to act in concert for the purpose of renewal.

In addition, concern about unemployment and the economic well being of the community led sponsors of the partnership to view the project as an economic development effort designed to find new employment opportunities. This expectation may have helped reinforce the school district's perception that the project was primarily a community responsibility. NWREL worked to promote dialogue between school and community people. A lengthy and productive meeting in May 1998 ended with school staff and community members agreeing to develop projects that addressed at-risk youth, families, and relevant curriculum as well as the economy.

In the intervening period, Metlakatla has made astonishing progress on several fronts, but remains stalled in the school-community partnership. The Tribal Council was awarded two federal grants in the fall of 1998. The Council received a 2.5 million dollar Welfare to Work Grant from the Department of Labor and a 2.5 million dollar Enterprise Community Grant from the Department of Agriculture. Each grant distributes the funds over a ten-year period. The partnership liaison was active in writing the grant proposals and has long been developing programs and plans for economic development. He has been working with University of Alaska Business course educators to develop local courses in entrepeneuralism and encourage small business starts in the community. In addition to economic development, he promotes the community's cultural and physical well-being. He invites the community to celebrate Tsimshian culture and remember their heritage with festivals, feasts, and arts shows. He organized a healing journey led by BIA counselors for substance addicted tribal members, and investigated alternative academic programs for at-risk and fetal alcohol syndrome youth.

All this important work was proceeding with almost no involvement on the part of the school. The liaison does work with a middle school counselor, who has written a proposal for adult education programs and is also an island native, but that is his only sustained school contact. When NWREL learned of the Council's grants, we spoke to school staff who had attended the meeting NWREL held on the island in May 1998 and been enthusiastic about the partnership, as well as the principal who attended the Joint Forum in October 1998. They did not know anything about the grants the community has received.

The fact that there is little contact between the school and community was discussed in the second formative evaluation. The school is staffed largely by non-natives. The majority of the Anglo teachers and administrators stay in the community for only a few years; many Island natives believe teachers come to earn high salaries and then move on. Ethnic divisions and school staff turnover rates are exacerbated by a senior district administrator who does not encourage staff involvement in the community. The superintendent had been involved in the partnership with NWREL, coming to several meetings in Portland, but he did not believe the

community would achieve anything in the partnership. His staff find it very difficult to pursue involvement in the community because he fosters a climate that does not encourage it.

Still, many school staff are eager to be involved in the community, and the Tribal Council is committed to building programs for local youth. Conversations with our liaison revealed that one focus of his federal grant proposals was local at-risk youth. We believed that to successfully develop and implement programs for youth, the school would have to be a close partner. NWREL therefore decided to create a discussion forum for members of the Tribal Council–including our liaison–and interested staff from the school. On March 17, 1999, NWREL convened a meeting in Metlakatla attended by a middle school teacher, the elementary school principal, the Tribal Council Director of Tourism, the Health Education and Welfare officer, and the head of the Board of Education in addition to the liaison and NWREL staff. We agreed that the entire community—including the school—should be asked to contribute ideas and suggestions as how to best spend the federal funding. It was decided that the community should be asked to meet and identify its goals and hopes for local youth; all programs developed within the two grants should help to realize those goals. The teachers and the principal asked that they be invited to participate in any Enterprise Community board or planning body that is organized.

Since this discussion, some progress has been made in inviting community input. The liaison arranged a community meeting at which people were informed of the grant and asked to come to an agreement about what they hoped young people would be prepared for after growing up and going to school on the island. There had been less progress in bringing school people into the conversation. The liaison, despite frequent suggestions from NWREL staff that he do so, has not contacted either of the two school staff who attended the March 1999 meeting. Recently, the liaison has begun working on a proposal for School-to-Work funds that requires collaboration with the schools. The mayor invited input from the superintendent who designated the high school principal to participate in preparing the proposal. While this is a positive step, the high school principal has not involved other teachers and staff in this work.

The grant activities are definitely nurturing flourishing network ties, but mainly between the council and funding agencies. Networks between school and community and between the community and NWREL or the other sites are less robust. There was an opportunity for the liaison to meet with other site representatives at NWREL's Diversity Forum in April 1999. NWREL was eager to see what Metlakatla might learn from sites that have built some broad community connections through school-to-work activities, such as White Pass. On the day of the forum, the liaison did not arrive. By phone, he apologized, explaining that consultants from the Department of Agriculture had arrived unexpectedly to go over the EC strategic plan; therefore, he would be unable to attend the forum. Networking opportunities across sites and between communities and schools are foiled by equally important but in fact competing networking activities with funding agencies. It is not only a question of scheduling. The problem lies in part with the dynamism and commitment of our liaison. He is the primary agent for economic development activities in addition to his duties on the Tribal Council. Without sustained and active support from the schools, the community cannot be expected to accomplish all that it might if its local networks were more elaborate.

His local networks are too shallow to provide support for all the activities he is called upon to manage; in turn, he is too busy to participate in forums that could enhance and expand his networks. It is telling that he had never been able to get a student to attend the forum.

There are opportunities for networking that can fit more easily into tight and overextended schedules, such as the listserve. The liaison contacted NWREL staff and asked for information on extant school-to-work programs when he began writing a grant proposal. He could have posted his query on the listserve and invited all the sites to contribute information. The liaison has used this list only once, in response to a discussion series on at-risk youth posted by NWREL. He offered a response, which he sent directly NWREL. Only after NWREL staff suggested that his response would be interesting to all did he agree to have it circulated on the list.

Here, we have learned that funded network contacts can take precedence over the NWREL partnership, and that these "outside" contacts also jeopardize developing links between the school and community. As people seek partners farther afield, those close at home may be overlooked. Yet it is these local network ties that can make really successful the projects undertaken with state and federal partners. Of course the federal grants in Metlakatla will build local programs, develop local businesses, and train local people. Community links will be grow stronger, but the activities that keep the community from attending NWREL events also make it more difficult for them to pursue stronger ties with the school.

Mackay, Idaho and the Mackay School District

Mackay is a homogenous, rural community situated in a beautiful mountainous recreation area in Idaho. The community has undergone economic distress in recent years associated with a downturn in agriculture, logging, and mining. In order to address this economic uncertainty, the community received a grant to fund an economic revitalization center and hired someone from outside the community to write grants and manage the center. The school and community's interest in becoming a pilot site arose from work begun at the center in trying to address these economic problems.

Of all the sites following the sequence of the design elements, Mackay progressed the farthest and has been the most thorough in implementing all the strategies associated with each design element. In part, this relates to recruiting a liaison who was already engaged in community development activities as the director of the Mackay Community Action Center. An active community council was formed and over 140 residents were personally interviewed. A community meeting was held with over 45 people participating in vision development. However, the length of the visioning session coupled with the complexities of developing a strategic action plan caused many participants to question the efficacy of the process design. As with folks in Metlakatla (AK), there was an impatience to get started on an activity. As a result, participants decided to build a playground to demonstrate progress. They chose to forego developing plans around their vision until a future date. In the interim, the liaison resigned in protest over disagreements with the city council and the school

superintendent. A new liaison was selected from the high school teaching staff and received a training orientation in Portland during the conference on community-based learning.

Several unplanned events have helped motivate and keep people involved in the partnership. A new superintendent was hired with a strong interest in school-to-work activities. The district investigated the possibility of submitting, together with the other pilot sites, a collaborative grant to the Kellogg Foundation. This brought an influential teacher into the conversation who had been working on a trout farming project with students and another teacher. This in turn led to a day-long staff development activity on integrating subject area content (e.g., science, English, the trout farm, etc.) and the community into the core curriculum. Moreover, the district received an innovation grant to implement community-based student outcomes.

Although many of these activities were not part of the original program design, they complemented the design principles and goals. In addition, key individuals provided the leadership and personal vision to sustain the project through changes in personnel and other related challenges. Unlike the Alaska site, the Mackay School District has played an active role in the school-community renewal project. Clearly, active leadership from the school appears to be an important variable. This can be seen in the area of curriculum where efforts of key teachers have led to funding from the Albertson Foundation to support school-community partnership through the Schools For Change Project. Further, the Trout Haven project was created through a partnership with a local fish farm owner. Students have been working with teachers and representatives of the Fish and Game Department to establish a fish breeding program and business. This, in turn, led to a day-long inservice on curriculum integration sponsored by NWREL.

By tapping into existing networks and forming new partnerships within the community, community-based learning opportunities have been expanded. However, as participants pointed out, the best laid plans and intentions can be sidetracked by unforeseen events. For example, efforts to increase the use of Trout Haven for instructional purposes have been difficult because of transportation, snow conditions, and limited expertise in curriculum integration. Moreover, some teachers have reduced or withdrawn their original interest in the project because of time and overriding concerns for achieving core curriculum objectives. This loss of direct support and/or interest has slowed the project, but not killed it. By staying focused and having a vision for how Trout Haven can serve the learning needs of students, teachers have been able to sustain student involvement well beyond the initiation stage.

As discussed in the Year Two Evaluation many of the new learning opportunities were serendipitous and resulted from networking opportunities NWREL facilitated. For example, the school district wanted to work with other partner pilot sites in writing a grant to the Kellogg Foundation. Each site was asked to send a representative to an orientation session. A teacher from Mackay, who had not previously been involved in work with NWREL, participated in the meeting. This event created a network link with the NWREL representative, led to inservice on curriculum integration, and a linkage with the Schools for Change Project. As a result, the school's Management of Change Committee and NWREL cosponsored a *Vision and Goals* retreat which brought school personnel together around curriculum planning and the role of community in meeting student outcomes.

Though this activity positioned NWREL as a resource to directly support school renewal, it also positioned NWREL as one resource among many. The superintendent and the representatives from the Management of Change Committee pointed out that NWREL's support (through December 2000) beyond the grant period of the Management of Change project (one year) would help ensure project success. In part, participants felt this was possible because both projects placed a major emphasis on community voice and involvement. This new linkage between NWREL and the Management project is one more indicator of the power of networking in support of rural school-community renewal. Yet, the school's grant related commitments can and do conflict with continued active participation in the NWREL partnership. Here, network links do not complement but controvert each other. NWREL must learn how to better harmonize all links.

As in Metlakatla, harmony is difficult to achieve because networks beyond the bounds of the community can exclude rather than enhance local connections. And, as in Metlakatla, though in different measure, Mackay suffers from incomplete integration between community and school. Since the first liaison resigned, the partnership focus seems to have shifted from the community to the school. The first liaison partnered with parents, business people, and university staff as well as district staff. The current liaison, a high school teacher, has not engaged any community people. The school continues to build ties, but they are more often outside of Mackay than within. The dynamic superintendent and principal are seeking funding and training programs from a variety of outside sources.

Critically, much of their funding success is based on the strong curricular emphasis on the community. Many teachers pursue community-based learning and community service projects, particularly the vocational education, science, and business teachers. To further facilitate work in this direction, the high school principal, in conjunction with funding from Dagget, instituted a precursor to block scheduling. Beginning last fall, all high school students spent the five morning class periods in traditional academic subjects. The afternoons were opened to interdisciplinary blocks arranged broadly in Language Arts, Multi-Media, Science, Math, and Vocational Education. Students may elect any block, called Lab, and engage in joint teacher/student- directed projects all semester. A science teacher led students to survey the area and calculate the dimensions of the reservoir. Students argued about which equations they would need and enlisted the aid of the math teacher in determining how to proceed. They also began a project after meeting with a former Mackay student who now works for the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The former student was doing a wildlife survey in the area, but a lack of Department funds impeded his project. Now the science lab is doing the survey. According to the former student and his director, the Mackay students are gathering better and more comprehensive data than their budget would ever permit. Finally, the school has strengthened ties to institutions of higher learning; it has begun distance learning courses with University of Idaho and Eastern Idaho Technical College.

A direct community link is also found in the Vocational Education Lab class's Trout Haven and oher aquaculture projects. They are building tanks and raising Tilapia fish, which along with trout raised for sports fishing, they will raise to sell. They are discussing with the marketing class how they should sell the fish in the community. The students had to use

geometry to calculate the area of the tanks; mechanics to build the pumps; and business and English to work out the marketing plan and write copy.

Problems arising with the Lab classes are due in part to local networking difficulties. First, at the beginning of the year, teachers met every Thursday afternoon to discuss students, curriculum, and how to proceed with these still experimental Labs. As the school year wore on, sporting events and trainings took teachers and the principal out of school. The weekly meetings were suspended. Teachers felt stymied in their ability to keep the momentum going as curriculum foundered and students who were not finding projects in their Lab classes could not be referred to other Lab classes because there was no longer a forum for prior teacher consultations. Second, some teachers feared the interdisciplinary approach was encroaching on their classes. The English teacher felt that his students' writing and communications activities would be made to serve the needs to the Vocational Education fish producers. The math teacher felt that her class and students' projects were unproductively interrupted by science students asking how to calculate the dimensions of the reservoir.

The high school teachers saw their biggest hurdle to be documenting and developing curriculum. Much of what they have accomplished is spontaneous and generated by student need or interests. Therefore teachers wonder how they can 1. Write a curriculum that can be followed year to year 2. Assess and evaluate students' work in traditional grading systems 3. Devise a structured, sustainable course that can proceed after the energy of initial projects has dwindled. They asked NWREL to observe the Lab classes and help write curriculum. NWREL staff observed two Labs and spoke with five teachers. She then discussed what she had heard and seen with the teachers, and suggested a broad plan for sustained study that alternated interdisciplinary encounters with community- or work- related projects. She also worked with teachers to devise a tool for evaluating class work. All agreed that students needed to spend some time reflecting on what they had accomplished; journals could become project histories as well as writing assignments.

NWREL staff refined these curriculum plans and evaluation guides, then sent them to the high school principal, asking him to pass the materials along to his staff. For the following two months, the high school math teacher said there was still no progress in curriculum development. Further questioning revealed that neither she nor any other teachers had ever seen the guides NWREL had sent. We immediately sent them directly to the math teacher who found them useful and shared them with the rest of the staff. This kind of "networking obstruction" is common and NWREL is as much to blame for sending materials to the principal. Principals receive so many materials, they are not often able to administer them all in a timely manner.

Networking difficulties are found within the school and within the community as a whole. It is less than ideal that our contacts are now primarily school staff, especially in light of local community issues. The two school staff who attended our April Forum on Diversity identified the gravest issue facing community unity to be the rift between longtime residents and relative newcomers. Even people who have lived in Mackay twenty years do not yet feel like "locals." The two teachers said that students could be especially cruel to new arrivals and bragged about "running out" new teachers. They harass new teachers until they leave, partly

because new teachers are "not locals" and partly because they believe their classes and assignments will be easier if new teachers leave before they can gain authority.

There is also somewhat of a disjuncture in the NWREL/Mackay partnership. One of the key elements of the partnership is the networking opportunities it provides; opportunities with the Laboratory, with the other sites in the project, and with other communities in the region. Mackay agreed to attend forums and meetings in signing the Memorandum of Understanding; these forums are one of the best places for the networking to occur. Yet, when the Mackay liaison was approached about attending the October Joint Forum, she said she was not interested and declined to attend. She gave the same response when she was invited to the April Forum. In October, the liaison explained that they had just instituted their Lab Classes and were encountering difficulties. They wanted NWREL to help them write curriculum. The liaison was too busy to share her work and experiences with the other sites nor did she consider asking the other site representatives for guidance in developing alternative curriculum and assessments. She did decide to attend the October Forum in order to explain the new schedule and classes and enlist the aid of NWREL in developing curriculum. When the liaison declined to attend the second forum, NWREL decided to ask other teachers who might have more flexible schedules or stronger community ties. We later learned that the liaison and the principal had discussed our invitation and their decision to decline was on behalf of the district as a whole. The principal felt it was wrong for NWREL to have asked other teachers. We apologized for our misunderstanding. When we explained the importance of the forum to the partnership and of the diversity issue to the community, he understood that it was a worthwhile venture, but was still constrained by the sheer number of days teachers were out of the classroom for funding workshops and trainings. He agreed that staff with fewer teaching responsibilities would be interested in attending.

The principal's concern that too many teachers were spending too much time out of the classroom for meetings, trainings, and conferences is a serious obstacle to the Renewal Project. The school continues to apply for a variety of grants and training opportunities. They were working with the Albertson Foundation and Daggett. Both agencies require a great deal of staff time for meetings and workshops. The principal said they had to prioritize in managing staff development time. If time away were spent on activities that could lead to funding, that had to take precedence over activities in which no money was forthcoming. Thus, we find NWREL's work and teacher networking opportunities hindered by a bottom-line yardstick. Students' networking opportunities are also constrained; many were missing school for sporting events and/or a technology fair. They are building other links, but overlooking those to which they are already connected.

In addition to concerns about potential funding, there are other reasons why there may be less networking development with Mackay. NWREL posted a discussion about at-risk youth and the responsibility of teachers to students who required a great deal of their time, to the detriment of the majority of students. The Mackay liaison asked to have her name removed from the distribution list so she would not receive these messages. She was not willing to join in the conversation nor even to learn what her colleagues were thinking and doing about issues she faces every day. She had explained to me several times that one of their problems in writing Lab curriculum is "problem students." While the majority of students may be

working on a project, there are always a few who refuse to participate or find the particular project uninteresting. Yet when the opportunity arose to bring her questions into a wider forum, and possibly find solutions, she asked not to be involved.

Overall, the district does preserve its community connections. The school invited the community to meet and tell them what it most wanted the school to do for its children. They identified three areas they wanted the school to focus on: reading, curriculum relevance, and character education. School staff take seriously these areas and have begun the focus on reading. There seems to be less of a clear idea about the direction to take on the question of character education; NWREL has offered resources, materials, and information on workshops covering the subject, but it may not be a priority right now.

The success of continued staff development, curriculum innovation, and grant proposals depends on resources outside the community. These are very important, but in the pursuit of funding, local resources may be overlooked. At the February 1997 Design Conference Mackay participants decided that they would like to begin a local radio station. Those participants are no longer involved in the partnership and there has been no more discussion of the radio station. Also, the time and energy needed to achieve what funding agencies require prohibits attendance at forums where other resources could be identified and developed in conversation with each other and other communities.

South Wasco County (Oregon) School District and Communities

South Wasco County Schools and communities' distress initially appeared more social than economic. Interest in the project was motivated by the Wamic community who rallied together in an effort to minimize the impact of state mandated consolidation. The MOU was reviewed by the school board and signed by the superintendent. Shortly after, all the administrators in the district were replaced as the consolidation plan went into force. Moreover, the school board was restructured under the new plan. A new superintendent was hired who found himself not only faced with a newly consolidated school district, but with a substantial financial shortfall and the responsibility of being a NWREL pilot site.

Due to a number of factors, this site withdrew from the NWREL partnership in1998. In order to explain his decision, and in the hope that other sites could learn from his experience, the superintendent and former liaison agreed to talk about his site's withdrawal at our October 1998 Forum. He explained that one of the problems he faced was an inability to form wide-ranging networks in his community. This inability was due in part to his dual position as superintendent and liaison. He advised that the superintendent could not be an effective liaison because the two positions were politically incompatible and because a superintendent simply does not have the time to devote to the liaison position. His difficulties also derived from the associations NWREL itself was seen to have in the community. When NWREL had first approached the community about the partnership, the three communities that comprise the district were struggling to come to terms with each other in the wake of an unwanted consolidation. The group that seized upon NWREL as a way of overcoming the inter-community dissension later reneged on commitments made to the other communities. The

district came to associate NWREL with that group and this unfortunate association brought few in support of partnership activities. Unable to expand the network, the superintendent found he was unable to continue the partnership.

North Franklin (Washington) School District and Communities

The North Franklin School District covers a vast geographic area in Eastern Washington. Four communities make up the district, which is housed, along with the high school in the largest community, Connell. There has been a history of top-level administrative turnover and isolation of the school from the community. Further, over the years the district has seen a large influx of Latino farm workers who have settled out of the migrant stream to permanently locate in the area. As a result, several of the schools in the district are over 50 percent Hispanic. School and community interest in being a pilot site grows from recognition of these changes and problems. The need for a strong community voice that reflects the diversity of the people and the communities has been a driving force in the pilot site work.

If one were to ascribe goals to the North Franklin pilot partnership, they would likely BE creating greater unity across all groups and communities in the district and building a strong, supportive partnership between the school district and the constituents served. PACE (Partners Achieving Community Excellence), the community group organized by the liaison and community members, appears to have emerged as a primary vehicle for achieving these goals. Its mission statement and the journey that led to its development illustrates a local networking process. In early training sessions held in Portland, participants were presented with strategies and ideas for helping a group develop. They were shown how to run effective meetings, how to sample community viewpoints, and how to develop action plans. It had taken this pilot site nearly a year and a half to use and adapt these training concepts and strategies to a point where they were ready to act. The process is ongoing. While PACE did not at first represent the diversity of local voices it was intended to involve from the original project design (i.e., a community council of the diverse constituent groups in the community, PACE members never lost sight of their responsibility to the whole community as noted in their list of challenges.

Their commitment has yielded remarkable results. Last year at our October Joint Forum, representatives again spoke of the problem that has hindered their progress in community development: they had not achieved the participation of the area's Hispanic residents. Due in part to their discussion and related issues other sites identified, we decided to focus on diversity at the April Forum. Yet, by March, North Franklin had made such strides they were no longer viewing participation of the Hispanic community as a critical issue.

Due to personal outreach, translation services, media reporting on local issues, and the community's recognition of the economic, as well as ethnic contours of the diversity issue, inclusive participation has been achieved. Once Anglo residents heard about the poverty that existed within their town, they were impelled to act. They organized fund-raisers to purchase heaters for the unheated homes that landowners provide and families are forced to live in due to poverty. They conducted a drive to collect winter clothing to donate to the families. A regional public radio station reported on the uneven access to health care found among non-native speakers and poor residents. They broadcast a story of a local girl who had lost an eye

as a toddler and has been anxious and shy around people since. The broadcast resulted in an anonymous donation for an artificial eye and the necessary trip to Seattle. The affect of this gift on the girl is remarkable; her teachers report her bright and eager to learn, interacting with them and the other children.

Residents have learned that their expectations were getting in the way of forging links with Hispanic residents. Anglos had been asking why Hispanics were not joining them. Now they see that they needed to become a part of Hispanic residents' lives, too. The team that attended the Diversity Forum was comprised of the liaison and two community members who were passionately involved in the district's bilingual education programs. One of the community members opposed board plans to segregate English and Spanish speakers in the first three grades. She fears early segregation will rob all classes of important learning and social experiences, and that there will be enduring tensions long after the students are to come miraculously together in the fourth grade. Still, the fact that North Franklin too was unable to bring any students to the forum points to the difficulties community members will have confronting the board without a united force that includes students as well as teachers and community residents.

Community outreach has produced other results as well. The liaison for the NWREL partnership has held a position with the district for several years. She is bilingual and her work with the partnership has allowed her to pursue community-oriented work. Her leadership has evolved into and important community force, yet throughout her tenure, she has not always felt support from her supervisors: the district federal programs officer and superintendent. She has worked closely with the home visitors and made many visits herself. She led the fundraising and clothing drives and is now collecting and making available a list of local medical providers who accept the coupons many recent immigrants hold. Although she worked to involve parents in their children's education, inform them of school activities, and enhance children's home life to make their school life better, she was rarely given work time to do these things.

Recently she concluded that her community work was so important that her work for the school could not proceed without it. She decided to leave her position in the school and devote all her time to the community organizing and outreach. An early project was the writing of a CDC proposal for a dental clinic. The liaison, a local nurse, and other community members joined together to research data for and write the proposal. The project was abandoned because some community members felt they did not have enough time to prepare the proposal and because some in the group had other commitments.

White Pass (Washington) School District and Communities

Unlike the other four pilot sites, White Pass (WA) represents an effort to scale up NWREL's rural community development work in collaboration with a third-party agency, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). WSSDA's interest in working with NWREL was to explore alternatives for expanding their strategic planning process to incorporate a major emphasis on community engagement. The school district's interest lay in their desire to develop a strategic plan for the school district with a component that would

allow and encourage a sharing of resources between school and community. Because of NWREL's work with school-community linked revitalization, White Pass applied to participate as a pilot site.

The strong and wide-ranging school-community links in the White Pass SD continue to flourish. The mill closures over the past year have brought people together and made students even more aware of how their work as students creates opportunities for their lives after school. In particular, the school continues to look for alternative forestry practices and local non-timber related employment opportunities. The partnership with the Forest Service and the White Pass Discovery team provides summer employment for young people and their stream monitoring year-round; mini-REAL projects bring elementary school students into the community; and the Visions class takes a unique approach to school-to-work in its summer scientists program. In February, the Forest Service announced that the Discovery Team has won its Caring for the Land Award in recognition of its community based, environmentally sound curriculum.

The district resubmitted their 21st Century Learn and Serve Grant application after review by NWREL staff. This grant application was also a collaborative venture: the state of Washington had ESDs write collective proposals. Each community wrote their piece, and the whole was submitted together. According to the liaison, this sort of state-driven collaboration is not optimal. It becomes an exercise in submitting to norms and structures as opposed to true collaboration. She was not surprised that they did not receive the grant.

White Pass exemplifies the collaborative spirit in many ways. They were the only site to bring a student to the Diversity Forum. The student learned a great deal from her participation and contributed insights and thoughtful discussion to the entire group. Representatives attendance at all forums and meetings provides information and inspiration to other sites and the White Pass team always feels they come away with useful information and resources. But much of their networking attempts among sites may be one-sided. Mackay's High School principal said he had been approached by a university research team interested in Trout Haven as a school-to-work case study. NWREL staff told him that White Pass has also discussed their program with a wider audience and was in the process of developing an evaluation of their school-to-work programs; we believed Mackay's school-to-work projects could be enriched by White Pass's experiences, and vice versa. The principal did not contact White Pass or follow-up in any other way.

In November 1998, White Pass school-to-work teachers and superintendent invited NWREL staff to meet with them and develop a school-to-work evaluation. We discussed the design of the evaluation forms and what they hoped to learn from them. The school staff decided to institute an evaluation because the information would be helpful and readily available for grant applications, but their greater concern is to learn whether or not the school-to-work programs are effective. We agreed to create separate questionnaires for elementary, middle, and high school. In addition, recent graduates, parents, and community members would also be asked to fill in a relevant questionnaire. The staff asked about the possibility of putting the evaluation forms on NWREL's web site so that students could answer the questions on the

computer and send the pages to a NWREL database. This has been done and students have already begun inputting their responses.

They do have some indication that their school-to-work and service learning curriculums are achieving their goals. In addition to their Forest Service Award, the school was recognized for its elementary school newspaper. They were asked to speak at the National School Boards Association Meeting in San Francisco. They brought students and teachers to present their exemplary project. In addition, White Pass was featured in the Northwest Reporter Magazine and its local East County Journal newspaper.

New projects include developing a mentoring project; the lead teacher contacted NWREL for ideas and resources. As with other sites, they are less likely to seize networking opportunities outside of face-to-face forums. She did not post her queries on the distribution list; therefore the other sites are not aware of White Pass's interest in mentoring nor of the resources they have accumulated. Recently the Alaska liaison asked NWREL for information concerning mentoring programs. He was not aware of White Pass's work, and as he did not put his query on the distribution list either, there was no chance for the two sites to share their information and experiences. Since the AK liaison did not attend the April Forum either, he was also unable to take that opportunity to discuss mentoring with the other sites.

Where We Are Now: NWREL and Sites

NWREL has conducted conferences, provided resources, trainings, and consulting to support sites in their work throughout this year. While networking has been a key component of this year's work, our evaluation findings report that networking is not a uniform activity. Numerous and competing networks can exist, and it may be the very success of some networks that stunts other. In particular, we have found that success in building networks with outside agencies, particularly funding agencies, threatens local ties and links. The painful irony of this situation is that the links to outside agencies depend on projects whose success is in fact dependent on local ties and networks. In the coming year, our challenge is to overcome inter-network conflict. In an attempt to move forward in this endeavor, we have closely examined ways in which network tensions develop. Though each site exhibits unique relationships and tensions in them, we are learning how to negotiate increasingly complex and embedded networks. Below is a discussion of some critical areas in which we are considering how to intervene.

North Franklin reports that "there is going to be a war here." When the community met to discuss alternatives to the board's segregated program for second language learners, they soon learned that their board would never hear them, let alone consider their ideas. They met in the school room where the board meeting would be held later that evening. As the postmaster, a bilingual community resident, was reading statistics on various programs' success, a board member entered, said, "your meeting is done," and turned off the lights. The post master said she was not done and after some verbal sparring, was continued reading.

The board has said their decision fulfills Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements and seems to imply that they therefore are not going to discuss the program they chose. The liaison has outlined a course of action the community may need to take, including calling OCR to see whether the board can proceed without community support and even if this program is a compliance program, but she is reluctant to act. The liaison does not want to intercede in a nascent, locally driven movement that is already beginning to yield leaders. Hoping to nurture these new leaders, she has not voiced her suggestions nor taken an active role in the community bilingual education group.

The community as a whole is guarded where the school administrators and board are concerned. In the past, it has been clear that community input is not invited nor accepted. At the last principal interviews, community members who were invited to be on the interview committee wrote interview questions. When they arrived for the interviews, the superintendent gave them prepared questions and told them to ask only those. Similarly, when parents asked for the names of community people who were involved in the planning meetings for the segregated programs, there was no response. When the board said they had decided to implement a segregated program because the Tri-Cities had done so, parents asked for the names of schools so they could visit the programs. There has been no response and now people are hearing that the Tri-Cities has decided to scrap that program.

As the liaison and I spoke, she commented that the superintendent has been an advocate of parent involvement in the schools, yet it is now apparent that he and the board only welcome parents helping teachers in the classrooms or voting for levies. They shun parents' political actions and voices. Now parents are becoming stronger voices, not only to advocate for their children, but to question the board's decisions and ask hard political questions.

White Pass

The Colville National Forest has contacted the district to learn how to connect the schools and communities within the Forest. The district sent out the Northwest Reporter Magazine article on their Discovery Team and other curriculum links. Their networking venture for the 21st Century Learning Community Grants was less successful, but that may be due to the state of Washington's structured as opposed to truly collaborative plan. The process did yield an important networking lesson, though. A year ago, the district wrote its own proposal; while that too was unsuccessful, they had a number of letters of support from local players. In the larger proposal this year, they did not have such letters because they do not have the wider political contacts needed to ask a state representative to write one. They determined that this year they must begin to develop some well placed political contacts as a means of enhancing opportunities for local networks.

Mackay

Mackay's highly successful networks with funding agencies and universities are almost matched by key links within the community. The biggest gap they may have is in their link to NWREL. Local ties could be stronger, but they are vital. Mackay's experiences with its school board is decidedly different from North Franklin's. Recently, the high school principal presented a plan to the board to give teachers collaboration time: from 8 o'clock to ten

o'clock Wednesday mornings. He argued that their strategic plans for curriculum change, career pathways Lab classes, and alternative assessment, teachers needed to discuss and develop work plans. The board agreed to the proposal, which will be implemented next fall. The principal had thought he would simply bring up the idea and had not even discussed it with the teachers. He had no idea it would be accepted and instituted.

This principal noted that it is largely due to Mackay's realization of many NWREL partnership goals that it has become difficult for it to adhere strictly to the partnership requirements. Five years ago, when the signed the MOU, none of the teachers or administrators traveled anywhere the entire school year. In the past two years, that has changed dramatically. Funding from the Albertson Foundation and Dagget oblige staff to attend conferences and trainings with what is becoming alarming regularity. After the demise of Dagget, Albertson revamped in a way that made it even more difficult for small schools such as Mackay to comply. In January 1999 Albertson announced new grant opportunities that demanded a series of time-consuming trainings, with a large number occurring in April.

Mackay has reached out to foundations as we encouraged in the 1997 Design Conference; it has pushed its curriculum into the community through work or service based learning, as we encouraged in the 1998 Community- Based Learning Forum; and it has solicited community members to be part of its strategic planning process, which is the heart of the School-Community Renewal process. Its progress in the partnership process means it is now involved in the very network relationships that take time and energy away from the partnership. Is its success the partnership's undoing? For a small rural school supporting those networks precludes remaining at the initial level of involvement in the NWREL partnership.

Metlakatla

The liaison continues to attend conferences and meetings with other Tribal groups and Enterprise Communities. Because he is a dynamic and effective leader, many of the projects he initiated and has received funding for, he is also managing. Developing economic ventures fits most closely with his training; he is less experienced in planning curriculum or in organizing community residents. This is just one reason why school-community interactions seem stalled. Another reason may be an effect of the social and class gap between the Anglo staffed school and the Native community. There is a social chasm between the two that seems to be bridge only through the most official and stilted channels. When plans for school-to-work monies were to be discussed, the Mayor contacted the superintendent. Two senior administrators followed official channels, which may be diplomatically preferred, but practically it is counterproductive. The superintendent delegated a politically safe participant for the Mayor's committee, but not necessarily the most knowledgeable staff person. The most knowledgeable people may be the Native middle school counselor or a middle school teacher active in the community. But the superintendent has in the past argued that Native staff are less qualified than the Anglos and he has been at odds with the middle school teacher on a number of issues. The superintendent's goal of maintaining his position within the community and the district will perhaps outweigh what is best for the community as a whole. He assigned the high school principal to work with community members on the development of the school-to-work grant proposal and we shall

have to see whether it is a positive move toward sustained contact. Still, the fact that the liaison must defer to the mayor and the superintendent because their titles carry great social weight means that more casual, continuous contact may not be on the immediate horizon. It seems that instead of collaborating with the school, the liaison has turned the school-to-work project over to them. Then he may not follow up if the project is ineptly handled or neglected. Community or Tribal Council members have not approached the elementary school principal and middle school teacher, both of whom participated in the NWREL facilitated meeting between school and community.

V. Conclusion and Implications

The previous formative evaluations recommended the incorporation of two new principles. The first emphasizes that NWREL staff must be especially sensitive to existing community networks and how they are organized to accomplish positive changes in their communities. The second principal suggested that diversity among rural communities means that they will seldom be at the same developmental place, especially in terms of their readiness to collaborate with the school or across networks and agencies. These two principles strongly mitigate the effectiveness of externally-applied models or designs. It was also suggested that care and flexibility be followed in delivering school-community development content. Lastly, it was recommended that the original implementation plan allow for more flexibility in addressing the changing conditions at each site and help sites build their capacity to draw on local experience and knowledge.

In this third year, we have honored these findings by concerning ourselves with the unique direction and context of each site. While this has yielded important accomplishments and furthered NWREL's and the sites' understanding of this work, it has presented some difficulties for our networking activities. Careful attention to each site's social, political, and economic context has left little opportunity to promote shared concerns, build common ground, or inspire mutual involvement. This does not mean that network development as a whole has suffered from our more individualized attention. Our focus on individual sites' concerns has led to flourishing network links between communities and funding agencies, national educational associations, and natural resource offices. What has suffered is network links among and within sites, and in some cases between sites and NWREL.

The local focus could potentially have led to the elaboration of each site's internal networks. The local focus could have brought each school more closely together with its community and brought in a variety of business and organizational partners as well. While we encouraged local network links and provided resources on how to promote them, we have only been partially successful in building them. In North Franklin, our support had helped build connections between Anglo and Hispanic residents. In Mackay, our work is leading to the building of bridges between newcomers and longtime residents. In Metlakatla, success has been slower in coming. Although we made a conscious effort to mediate rifts between school and community people, little in the way of ongoing contact has resulted.

Sensitivity to local context does not imply nor necessitate exclusion of individual sites from each other. Our continued work must build contexts that allow each site to build on its own insights and knowledge while creating forums for dialogue, interaction, and exchange across sites. Our April Diversity Forum in Coeur d'Alene ID was an attempt at such work, but we are in the position now where sites are so busy pursuing larger network links that they did not have time or people to attend Coeur d'Alene. In the coming year, we will continue to encourage sites developing mentoring projects, such as White Pass and Metlakatla to consult each other.

One solution may be to find ways to integrate the various networks in which a community finds itself involved. The simplest and most effective place to start is by linking together sites with similar projects. Metlakatla and White Pass can and should be talking to each other about mentoring programs and school-to-work curriculum. Mackay and Metlakatla could confer on the issue of insiders versus outsiders; and Metlakatla could talk to North Franklin about how the community people can be recognized and heard by often hostile school administrators.

Secondly, each of the sites could learn how to manage outside funding with limited personnel North Franklin recently abandoned a proposal writing project because some on the committee feared there were not enough people to work on the project who were not also employed full time in other jobs. Mackay, Metlakatla, and White Pass are all struggling with too few people wearing too many hats. North Franklin could show how the coalition of people it assembled from across the community can counteract the tendency for one person to be doing too much; but it must also learn how to sustain coalitions, particularly in the absence of institutional support.

Next Steps

In order to effect some of the changes suggested in this third year evaluation, NWREL can undertake the following measures:

1. Pursue topical discussions on the listserve. The topics should reflect timely concerns raised by any site.

2. Invite conference calls and "mini-listserve" discussions between sites working on similar projects

3. Promote as service learning assignments for site representatives consultations with other sites.

4. Insist that larger, more inclusive teams attend NWREL forums

In addition, we must continue to encourage teachers and community people who are building relationships and developing as leaders. Invited to the April Forum was a North Franklin woman active in finding alternatives to bilingual education. Her work will draw parents, teachers, administrators and students together. This network must be supported by positive

board experiences other sites can provide. Inter-site collaboration can go beyond general information sharing and have a real impact on each other's work.

References

Miller. B.A. (1995). The role of rural schools in community development: Policy issues and implications. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, *11*:3, 163-172.

Owens, T., & Wang, C. (1996). *Community-based learning: A foundation for meaningful educational reform*. School Improvement Research Series. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Seltzer, E. (1997). *Metropolitan briefing book*. Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies. Portland, OR: Portland State University